



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEXICAN CITIZEN SENTENCED FOR TRANSPORTING ILLEGAL ALIENS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a citizen of Mexico was sentenced in federal court today for transporting illegal aliens within the United States.

Yovani Diaz-Cruz, 24, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to one year and six months in federal prison without parole.

On April 11, 2005, **Diaz-Cruz** pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens within the United States. By pleading guilty, **Diaz-Cruz** admitted that he transported 12 illegal aliens on March 12, 2005, in Jasper County, Mo.

At the time of the incident, **Diaz-Cruz** was stopped by law enforcement as he was driving a van with another Mexican national. Upon further investigation, law enforcement officers located another 12 Mexican nationals hiding under a nearby bridge, Graves said. It was later determined that the 12 illegal aliens each paid between \$1,000 and \$2,000 for transportation from Phoenix, Ariz, to Georgia or Kentucky, Graves added.

Diaz-Cruz was originally charged in a criminal complaint filed in federal court on March 17, 2005, in Springfield. The criminal complaint was later replaced by a federal indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury on March 30, 2005, in Springfield.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow